

IN THE CLAIMS:

The status of the claims is as noted below.

1. (Currently Amended) In a soft tissue paper machine having an essentially impermeable transfer belt for conducting a soft tissue web through a shoe press nip in the press section of the paper machine, and from the shoe press nip directly to a Yankee cylinder in the dryer section of the paper machine in a closed draw, which Yankee cylinder forms, together with a transfer means, a transfer nip transferring the soft tissue web from the transfer belt to the Yankee cylinder, ~~the improvement comprising an essentially impermeable~~ transfer belt having a carrier and an elastically compressible polymer layer on its side facing the paper web, the polymer layer having a hardness between 50 and 97 Shore A and having a web-contacting surface which has a pressure-sensitive resettable degree of roughness, the web-contacting surface having a degree of roughness in a non-compressed state of $R_z = 2-80 \text{ } \mu\text{m}$, measured according to ISO 4287, Part I, and a lower degree of roughness of $R_z = 0-20 \text{ } \mu\text{m}$ when the polymer layer is compressed by a linear load of 20-220 kN/m applied to the essentially impermeable transfer belt as measured in a non-extended press nip,

wherein the transfer of said soft tissue web from said shoe press nip directly to the Yankee cylinder is improved due to said transfer belt's web-contacting surface having a pressure-sensitive resettable degree of roughness.

2. (Currently Amended) ~~An improvement~~ A belt as claimed in claim 1, wherein the essentially impermeable transfer belt has an air permeability of less than $6 \text{ m}^3/\text{m}^2/\text{min}$, measured according to the method stated in "Standard Test Method for Air Permeability of Textile Fabrics, ASTM D 737-75, American Society of Testing and Materials".

3. (Currently Amended) ~~An improvement~~ A belt as claimed in claim 1, wherein the polymer layer comprises a polymer composition taken from the group consisting of acryl polymer resin, polyurethane polymer resin and polyurethane/polycarbonate polymer resin composition.

4. (Currently Amended) ~~An improvement~~ A belt as claimed in claim 1, wherein the polymer layer comprises a particulate filler which has a hardness different from that of the polymer composition, and is taken from the group consisting of kaolin clay, polymer material or metal.

5. (Currently Amended) ~~An improvement~~ A belt as claimed in claim 1, wherein the polymer layer completely encloses the carrier.

6. (Currently Amended) ~~An improvement~~ A belt as claimed in claim 1, wherein the carrier is endless.

7. (Previously Presented) In a soft tissue paper machine having an essentially impermeable transfer belt for conducting a soft tissue web through a shoe press nip in the press section of the paper machine, and from the shoe press nip to a Yankee cylinder in the dryer section of the paper machine in a closed draw, which Yankee cylinder forms, together with a transfer means, a transfer nip transferring the soft tissue web from the transfer belt to the Yankee cylinder, the improvement comprising an essentially impermeable transfer belt having a carrier and an elastically compressible polymer layer on its side facing the paper web, the polymer layer having a hardness between 50 and 97 Shore A and having a web-contacting surface which has a pressure-sensitive resettable degree of roughness, the web-contacting surface having a degree of roughness in a non-compressed state of $R_z = 2-80 \text{ } \mu\text{m}$, measured according to ISO 4287, Part I, and a lower degree of roughness of $R_z = 0-20 \text{ } \mu\text{m}$ when the polymer layer is compressed by a linear load of 20-220 kN/m applied to the essentially impermeable transfer belt as measured in a non-extended press nip,

wherein the transfer of said soft tissue web from said shoe press nip to the Yankee cylinder is improved due to said transfer belt's web-contacting surface having a pressure-sensitive resettable degree of roughness, and wherein the polymer layer is embossed to produce embossed soft tissue.

8. (Currently Amended) ~~An improvement~~ A belt as claimed in claim 1, together with a transfer means which comprises the transfer belt itself, which runs round a predetermined part of the Yankee cylinder to form an extended transfer nip.